

THE WANDERING SPIRIT

By Mildred Caroline Goodridge.

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Roscoe Phail was dead. There was no repulsion, dread or lamented loss of identity present with him, as in the same room where his white set face looked up from the satin-lined



Arrayed in a Plain Dress Was a Young Girl.

casket he was conscious only of being a spiritual entity, nothing more.

A part of a ray of light, of a current of air of a nameless essence, lacking form and substance, still did he possess the full comprehending sense. Pain was gone, desire, speculation—he was simply passive and content. He viewed the group in the room clearly, he took in their spoken words.

"He was a good man," said one of his oldest former friends.

"A patient unselfish person to the last," appended a physician.

"Soulful always, charitable and above all grateful," added the clergyman. "They tell he was once a dissipated man, leading to a painful sickness for years. He came out of the ordeal a changed, chastened being. In his gratitude for life, he vowed to devote it to others. Nobly has he kept his pledge."

And then the low voiced throng began to recite many and many incidents of little and great deeds that the philanthropist had done for the good of humanity.

Roscoe Phail took the recitals in as one would listening casually to a moderately interesting story. He was not conscious of self glorification, of the deserving reward for well doing. Finally the lawyer said:

"Strange, but the day Mr. Phail died I received a letter from a far distant place. It seems that about ten years ago Mr. Phail put on his feet a worthless inebriate named Morton Ross. The letter is from a relative of that person, now dead, telling how Ross reformed and how that incident has led to a great result to humanity."

Morton Ross! Why, Phail had forgotten the incident years ago. Even now it appealed to him as quite commonplace among what he considered greater acts of thoughtfulness and charity in his career.

Ah! He did not know—did not know that the deed he did that day in the long past for one Morton Ross, was destined to shine and bring forth glorious fruit for aye!

With the removal of his mortal part the next day, the spirit of Roscoe Phail seemed to float from the old environment. It was a flight to the stars, a grope beneath vast ocean depths, now in the holy silence of some dense African forest never invaded by the foot of man, again on the mountain tops of some lofty Himalaya range, unhampered, time, space, distance annihilated, his ego